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Exploring the Correlation Between Emotional Competence and the Leisure Time of Young People

Jelena Petrović[1*], *Dragana Dimitrijević Pejčić*[1], *Katarina Rančić*[2]

[1]University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy, Niš, Serbia,
e-mail: jelena.petrovic@filfak.ni.ac.rs, dragana.dimitrijevic@filfak.ni.ac.rs
[2]Technical school Pirot, Serbia, e-mail: katarina.rancic@tsp.edu.rs

Abstract: Leisure time plays an essential role in shaping the lifestyle of young people and is closely linked to their emotional well-being and overall happiness. This paper investigates the leisure time patterns of young people and explores the correlation between these patterns and their level of emotional competence. The research involved 150 young people from South and Eastern Serbia, aged 18 to 30. Participants' emotional competence was measured using a short version of the Emotional Skills and Competence Questionnaire (ESCQ). The key determinants of emotional competence include the ability to perceive and understand emotions, express and label emotions, and manage and regulate emotions. To measure dominant leisure time patterns, we employed a specially constructed Likert-type scale, focusing on elite, hedonistic, sports–recreational patterns, and a traditional-unconventional pattern divided into passive and family categories. The results indicated that young people exhibited partial emotional competence, with the ability to perceive and understand emotions as the most developed aspect. The most frequently reported leisure activities fell under the hedonistic and passive patterns. The data revealed significant correlations between all aspects of emotional competence and the elite, hedonistic, and sports–recreational patterns, with the strongest correlation observed between emotional competence and the elite pattern, which includes cultural activities, reading, and volunteer work. The results indicate that a higher level of emotional competence development is associated with the selection of quality leisure activities. Therefore, we could rely on the educational potential of leisure time to promote the development of emotional competence and vice versa.

Keywords: *leisure time, emotional competence, emotional education, young people.*

Introduction

Leisure time affects all areas of social life, but its meaning varies among different groups. It is highly appreciated by hardworking individuals or students who have numerous obligations. However, it can be neglected by the unemployed, as it dominates the entire framework of their everyday life. It could be structured and focused on enjoyment or personal development, or unstructured and marked by boredom. In any case, it is an important part of everyone's life.

For young people, according to many authors (Ilišin, 2007; Mlinarević, 2004; Zeijl et al., 2001), leisure time is even more important, as it can support the intensive formative development they are undergoing. It ensures young people the freedom to explore their interests and find fulfillment, helping them achieve self-actualization. Furthermore, wisely chosen leisure activities offer rest, recreation, and personal growth, which are essential during this stage of life. Some data indicate that young people are often engaged in unstructured and unproductive activities, such as spending time with friends, participating in hedonistic activities like entertainment and music (Mlinarević, 2004), using the internet (Opić et al., 2014), or engaging in unstructured sports activities (Petrović et al., 2018). This fact makes educational interventions in this realm a necessity. Education should establish a balance between responsibility and

*Corresponding author: jelena.petrovic@filfak.ni.ac.rs

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freedom. For example, with age, the frequency of unstructured physical activities declines during the transition from adolescence to adulthood; however, the frequency of physical activities in adolescence still predicts physical activity levels in adulthood, especially among males (Kjønniksen et al., 2008). So, educators need to empower young people to make more informed choices and stick to them. Developing a culture of responsible leisure time use, focusing on organized and productive activities, and finding a balance between passive and active pursuits contribute to personal development and can be beneficial for physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being.

As it involves the free choice of activities and personal contacts, leisure time represents an open space for young people to explore their feelings and emotions. They are less likely to suppress emotions and exhibit self-doubt and insecurities during activities they freely choose for themselves. Moreover, they will develop the ability to perceive and understand their own emotions, express and label them, and manage and regulate them, which are the primary assets of emotional competence (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). In this sense, leisure time can be the basis for emotional development, and its potential should be taken into consideration by educators.

Considering that the emotional aspect of personality influences the choices we make, including the choice of leisure activities, we argue that there is a two-way connection between the emotional competence of young people and the way they spend leisure time. We expect young people with highly developed emotional competence to be more likely to participate in organized, social, and humanitarian activities, and those that support their personal development.

We assumed that people who are more inclined to dedicate their time to helping others through various forms of volunteering and social activism have a higher level of emotional competencies. Young people whose free time is filled with various social activities have more opportunities to develop socio-emotional competencies, unlike those who spend their free time passively. To test this assumption, we dedicate this paper to investigating the correlation between emotional competence and leisure time among young people.

Theoretical Framework

Free choice in leisure time enhances enjoyment, promotes positive personality development, and is closely linked to emotional well-being and overall happiness. The selection of leisure activities greatly influences one's lifestyle, and it develops in patterns that can be recognized and studied.

Patterns in leisure-time activities are determined by the frequency of a particular group of activities and explain people's interests and life orientations. The most frequently researched patterns across different cultures are cultural patterns (Ilišin, 2007) and family patterns (Zabriskie et al., 2001). Initially, cultural patterns were divided into rural, urban, and elite patterns; but, five additional patterns were later added, including the sport pattern, family pattern, passive pattern, media pattern, and activist pattern (Ilišin, 2007). The family pattern can also be divided into two: a core pattern that includes family lunch, watching TV, and backyard activities, and a balanced pattern encompassing activities such as community events, tourism, and adventure activities (Zabriskie et al., 2001).

For this research, we employ a division of leisure patterns into elite, hedonistic, sports-recreational, and traditional-unconventional pattern, as described by Mlinarević (2004). The traditional-unconventional pattern is based on family activities, traditional folklore games, as well as unstructured activities, including watching TV, using the Internet, and playing computer games. We divided this pattern into the family pattern and the passive pattern for the sake of better clarity. The sports-recreational pattern encompasses a range of active and recreational sports activities, attending sporting events, and social games. The hedonistic pattern represents leisure activities that provide fun and enjoyment, such as attending clubs and social gatherings.

The starting point for our research is the previously assumed correlation between different emotions, leisure activities, and general well-being and mental health. Leisure time provides numerous opportunities for practicing skills such as tolerance, democratic behaviour, conflict resolution, and communication skills (Opić et al., 2014), which highlight its significant potential for social and emotional development and increase our research interest in this topic. Engagement in leisure activities is positively associated with the expression of positive emotions, especially in females (Zhang and Zheng, 2017). Pleasant feelings associated with leisure activities are often linked to better mental health; however, a high frequency of entertainment activities can also harm mental health (Mana and Barman, 2020). Leisure activities based on competition, such as

sports or games, can undermine interpersonal communication and support in close relationships. However, participation in shared activities with peers is indirectly correlated with the development of interpersonal competence (Tuggle, 2014). Also, previous research confirmed the connection of positive emotions with cultural leisure activities: positive emotions such as joy and curiosity develop before and increase during the leisure travel experiences (Mitas et al., 2012); high school theatre experience correlates with emotional knowledge and developing the strategies to regulate emotions (Larson and Brown, 2007).

Emotional competence is a learned ability that is manifested in external activity or work and is based on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2001). The concept of competencies as learned abilities forms the basis of Goleman's idea of emotional intelligence. According to the construct of emotional intelligence by Mayer and Salovey, there are four levels of ability, ranging from basic psychological processes to more complex ones that integrate emotions and cognition, namely: perception and expression of emotions; the emotional aspect of thinking, understanding, and analysing emotional information; and emotion regulation. Within each of these key competencies, there are individual competencies, such as the ability to identify emotions, the ability to use emotional states to solve problems, and the ability to understand the relationships between different emotions (Salovey et al., 2008; Salovey and Mayer, 1990). In this research, we focused on the main aspects of emotional competence, which are the abilities to perceive and understand emotions, express and label emotions, and manage and regulate emotions.

Although emotional competence and leisure time are widely investigated phenomena, only a few studies indicate mutual relationships between them. One of the first studies examining the influence of competencies on leisure activities dates back to the past century and confirms that emotional competence determines the frequency of activities, as well as the fact that the lower the emotional competence, the higher the subjective feeling of difficulty in everyday activities (Pushkar et al., 1997). Nowadays, strong positive correlations between emotional intelligence and physical leisure activities have been confirmed, particularly in aspects of emotional competence, such as self-awareness, emotional stability, and relationship management. However, correlations were not significant regarding empathy and altruistic behaviour (Singh and Fellow, 2017).

The role of leisure in developing and utilizing socioemotional competence is highlighted in a review paper by Iwasaki (2006). The author distinguished four aspects of the connection between them: leisure increases positive emotions and well-being; positive identities and self-esteem can be gained through leisure; leisure activities develop social and cultural connections and skills; and leisure contributes to personal and learning development.

Materials and Methods

This paper aims to identify the dominant leisure patterns of young people in Serbia and to investigate whether their emotional competencies correlate with the dominant patterns of their leisure time. Our primary hypothesis was that young people with more developed emotional competence would be more productive in their free time and would more often choose activities that have a positive influence on their development and lifestyle. Thus, emotional competence will positively correlate with elite, sport-recreational, and family patterns.

Data collecting and processing

The theoretical foundation for developing the first instrument was based on the leisure patterns system established by Mlinarević (2004), which we adapted by splitting the traditional-unconventional pattern into two categories: the passive leisure pattern and the family pattern. To identify the dominant leisure patterns among participants, we used a 5-point Likert scale specially designed for this study. Participants rated how often they engaged in activities listed on the scale. It included 43 items (activities), divided into five subscales: elite, hedonistic, passive, sports–recreational, and family pattern. The elite pattern subscale examined the social and personal engagement of young people in their leisure time. This subscale consisted of eleven items, including: I use my free time to read books; I attend seminars and lectures in areas that interest me; I participate in the activities of a youth association; I participate in humanitarian activities; and I visit cultural and artistic events organized in my city. The hedonistic pattern encompasses various forms of unstructured entertainment, leisure activities such as listening to music, and modern forms of communication. The following items represent it: I visit festivals and concerts; I play board games

(such as cards and Monopoly); I spend my free time during the day drinking coffee with friends; I relax to good music and have a good time with friends. The passive pattern includes activities such as resting, lounging, watching television, playing games on electronic devices, and using the Internet and social networks. Nine items cover the passive pattern, including: I watch reality shows; I use my leisure time to watch movies and series; I play games on my phone; I scroll social networks; I use my leisure time to get a good night's sleep. The subscale related to the sports-recreational pattern contains eight items and explores participation in active and recreational sports, attendance at sporting events, and involvement in sports in both active and passive forms. The representative items for this subscale are: I spend time with my family or friends engaging in joint hobbies or recreational activities (such as cycling, going to the pool, or participating in sports); I practice aerobics, fitness, or visit the gym; I follow sports channels; and I attend sports events and competitions. The family pattern emphasizes the importance of fostering family and traditional values during leisure time, encompassing activities such as caring for the home and family, as well as respecting traditions, customs, and religious beliefs. It contains nine items, including the following: I organize or attend family gatherings; I respect the family custom of having lunch or dinner together; I perform household chores such as vacuuming, dusting, and cleaning the house; I participate in caring for a pet. The alpha coefficient value of the scale was α = 0,870, indicating high reliability.

A shortened version of the ESCQ (Takšić, 2002) scale, comprising 15 items, was used to measure the emotional competencies of participants. In our sample, the alpha coefficient value was 0,824. Initially, it was developed in a Croatian setting as a 45-item scale based on the theoretical framework of the emotional intelligence model (Mayer and Salovey, 1997) and validated in different countries (Avsec et al., 2020; Faria et al., 2006). The ESCQ also showed strong positive correlations with the maintenance of positive mood and subjective well-being (Takšić, 2002). It seems reasonable to expect that abilities related to perception, understanding, managing, and using emotions to achieve desired goals would correlate with dominant leisure patterns.

The research was conducted among young people aged 18 to 30 from the southern and eastern regions of the Republic of Serbia. Data collection was conducted online using a Google Form questionnaire. We used convenience sampling based on voluntary participation and the principle of anonymity. After collecting the data, the sample was divided into subgroups based on gender (male, 46.7%, and female, 53.3%), age (18-20, 18%, 21-25, 54%, and 26-30, 28%), and work engagement (student, 42,7%, unemployed, 23,3%, and employed,34%).

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. was used for processing data. To ensure the reliability of the instruments, Cronbach's alpha test was applied. To determine the frequency of leisure patterns and the level of emotional competence, we calculated descriptive statistics. For analyzing the differences between subgroups, we conducted a t-test and an ANOVA test. Finally, to investigate the correlation between emotional competence and dominant leisure patterns, we calculated Pearson's coefficient of correlation.

Results

The results are presented in three parts. First, we will describe the emotional competence of our participants, then the dominant pattern of leisure time, and finally, the established correlation between them, which will explain the nature of the connection between emotional competence and leisure activities.

Emotional competence of young people

As we mentioned earlier, emotional competence can be defined as the ability to perceive and differentiate your own emotions and the emotions of others, as well as using emotional knowledge to develop social interactions and regulate behavior (Peter Salovey and Mayer, 1990). In this research, based on self-reports from participants, we measured the level of three aspects of emotional competence: the ability to perceive and understand emotions, express and label emotions, and manage and regulate emotions.

Table 1. Level of emotional competence

	N	M	Sd
Ability to perceive and understand emotions	150	**4.06**	0.16
Ability to express and label emotions	150	3.91	0.63
Ability to manage and regulate emotions	150	3.73	0.96

The statistical data, presented in Table 1, suggest that our respondents are partially emotionally competent. To investigate the differences in levels of development of aspects of emotional competence, we ranked them by calculating the arithmetic means for each aspect. Results indicate that the ability to perceive and understand emotions (M = 4.06) was the most developed aspect of their emotional competence, and the ability to manage and regulate emotions (M = 3.73) was the least developed. However, there were minimal differences among means. These results suggest that our respondents utilize their emotional knowledge to regulate emotions and behavior, a characteristic of emotionally competent individuals.

Regarding the gender of the respondents, no statistically significant difference was found, indicating that the emotional competence of young people does not differ by gender in any of the components of emotional competence studied.

Regarding the age of our participants, a statistically significant difference was observed in their abilities to perceive and understand emotions (ANOVA test = 7.670; $p = 0.01$; $p < 0.05$) and their abilities to express and label emotions (ANOVA test = 3.330; $p = 0.39$; $p < 0.05$). Both aspects of emotional competence are more developed in the older group of participants (26-30 years), which is expected based on existing literature data that emotional competence develops with age.

Patterns of leisure time of young people

All the activities that young people engage in during their leisure time can be observed through patterns. For this research, we investigated the frequency of five leisure patterns among young people and analyzed the differences in these patterns by gender, age, and employment status.

Table 2. Dominant leisure time patterns

	N	M	Sd
Hedonistic pattern	150	3.83	0.63
Passive pattern	150	3.48	0.56
Family pattern	150	3.33	0.85
Sports-recreational pattern	150	3.04	0.77
Elite pattern	150	2.69	0.81

Results indicate that the most frequent activities generally belong to the hedonistic and passive pattern, while the least dominant are leisure activities associated with the elite pattern. These results are not surprising, considering that the hedonistic pattern includes activities such as going out and having fun in clubs, while the passive pattern includes playing video games and watching television. These activities are characteristic of the young population's leisure time. Although they are shown to have a low frequency, the activities of the elite pattern are not negligible, especially considering that these are academic and cultural activities that, by their nature, do not usually involve daily implementation. Nevertheless, these numbers provide us with important information that suggests encouragement toward more productive leisure is desirable.

Considering the gender of the participants, a significant difference was confirmed in the elite and family pattern of leisure time. The elite pattern is significantly more dominant (t-test = -5.680; $p = 0.00$; $p < 0.05$) in females than in males, as well as the family pattern (t-test = -10.069; $p = 0.00$; $p < 0.05$). This data aligns with the cultural perspective of our society, in which women tend to pay more attention to culture, art, and volunteer work compared to men, as well as with the traditional division of roles in patriarchal culture, which is characteristic of our society, where women are often more dedicated to family responsibilities.

Observing the age, statistically significant differences in the representation of elite, family, and passive leisure patterns are confirmed. The elite (ANOVA test = 9.71; $p = 0.00$; $p < 0.05$) and family pattern (ANOVA test = 22.06; $p = 0.00$; $p < 0.05$) are most common among young people from the oldest group of

respondents (26-30 years). When it comes to the passive pattern (ANOVA test = 15.08; p = 0.00; p < 0.05), the data show that the passive pattern is most common in the youngest group of respondents (18-20 years). These results are also expected, assuming that the pattern implying easy fun, such as playing games, watching movies, and TV channels, would be the choice of senior high schoolers and first-year college students.

Table 3. Dominant leisure pattern regarding participants' employment

	Employment	N	M	Sd	Anova	df	P
Elite pattern	Student	64	2.85	0.75	5.78	2	0.004
	Employed	51	2.75	0.77			
	Unemployed	35	2.12	0.85			
Hedonistic pattern	Student	64	3.94	0.61	3.21	2	0.043
	Employed	51	3.64	0.64			
	Unemployed	35	3.83	0.48			
Sports – recreational pattern	Student	64	3.17	0.83	4.24	2	0.016
	employed	51	2.79	0.74			
	unemployed	35	3.17	0.58			
Family pattern	Student	64	3.51	0.79	12.36	2	0.000
	employed	51	3.51	0.71			
	unemployed	35	2.74	0.89			
Passive pattern	Student	64	3.51	0.44	15.12	2	0.000
	employed	51	3.20	0.57			
	unemployed	35	3.82	0.54			

Statistical analyses of the data, which included employment as a research variable (Table 3), revealed a statistically significant difference in all investigated leisure patterns. Elite and hedonistic leisure patterns are significantly represented in the subgroup of employed students, in contrast to other groups. The family leisure pattern is dominant in the subgroups of students and employed participants, but it is significantly lower in the subgroup of unemployed participants.

The passive pattern is most prevalent among unemployed respondents, followed by students, and is least prevalent among the employed. These results are supported by the data referred to earlier, which show that the highest prevalence of passive pattern is among the youngest population, between 18 and 20 years of age, most of whom are unemployed.

Correlation between leisure time patterns and emotional competence

After determining the dominant leisure pattern and level of emotional competence among our respondents, this part of the research investigated the relationship between young people's emotions and their leisure time spending.

Table 4. Correlation between leisure time patterns and emotional competence

		Ability to perceive and understand emotions	Ability to express and label emotions	Ability to manage and regulate emotions
Elite pattern	Pearson's correlation	0.492**	0.532**	0.310**
	P	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hedonistic pattern	Pearson's correlation	0.242**	0.348**	0.180*
	P	0.003	0.000	0.027
Sports-recreational pattern	Pearson's correlation	0.209*	0.189*	0.227**
	P	0.010	0.021	0.005
Family pattern	Pearson's correlation	0.388**	0.417**	0.160
	P	0.000	0.000	0.051
Passive pattern	Pearson's correlation	-0.073	0.069	0.033
	P	0.373	0.401	0.691

The obtained data showed a moderate to strong positive correlation between all aspects of emotional competence and elite, hedonistic, and sports–recreational patterns. The most significant correlation was between all aspects of emotional competence and the elite pattern (which includes cultural activities, reading, and volunteer work) of spending leisure time. The family pattern in leisure time is also positively correlated with the ability to perceive and understand emotions, as well as to express and label them.

Results did not indicate any significant correlation between the passive pattern of spending leisure time and any aspect of emotional competence. This means that our participants choose activities from the passive pattern regardless of their level of emotional competence development.

Discussion

Based on the results, we can conclude that our participants spend most of their leisure time in hedonistic and passive activities. This is in accordance with data from previous studies (Opić et al., 2014; Petrović et al., 2018) as well as the characteristics of the participants' age. Since the nature of elite activities usually does not involve daily engagement, we conclude that young people in our sample spend a satisfying, though improvable, amount of productive leisure time. Elite leisure pattern activities have unquestionable benefits (Fletcher et al., 2003; Larson and Brown, 2007; Mitas et al., 2012) and contribute to overall well-being, education, and emotional development, making them important assets to further development. Data on gender and age differences provide us with more information and guidance on how to enhance this practice. Our results, similar to some previous research (Ilišin, 2007; Zeijl et al., 2001), show that activities included in the elite leisure pattern are more dominant among older participants and females, indicating which parts of the population the action should be directed toward.

Regarding emotional competence, our participants demonstrated a highly developed ability to perceive and understand emotions, as well as slightly less developed abilities to express and label emotions; however, their ability to manage and regulate emotions was partially developed. These results are important for understanding the emotional development of young people because emotional awareness and understanding of emotions are the first steps toward emotional regulation (Ikävalko et al., 2020). Still, there is more work to be done on the way toward achieving full emotional maturity and emotionally competent behavior.

Interestingly, contrary to our expectations, gender was not a significant variable, as results showed similar emotional competence in both female and male participants. On the other hand, expectations regarding age were confirmed, with results indicating that older participants (aged 26-30) are significantly more emotionally competent. Similar results were obtained by Dimitriu and associates (Dimitriu et al., 2014) in a sample consisting of university students.

Ultimately, the primary objective of this research was to investigate whether the type of leisure activities, as represented by leisure patterns, correlates with the level of emotional competence among young people. Results indicate a significant correlation with elite, hedonistic, and sport-recreational patterns, but no significant correlation with the passive leisure pattern. The most significant correlation was found between all aspects of emotional competence and the elite pattern of spending leisure time, which includes cultural activities, reading, and volunteer work. This confirmed our hypotheses, based on previous studies, which showed that activities such as writing, composing music, painting, and other cultural pursuits significantly enhance emotional creativity (Trnka et al., 2016). Additionally, research has found that theater experiences enhance the ability to regulate emotions (Larson and Brown, 2007).

Although the previous research (Mahoney and Stattin, 2000) confirms a connection between unstructured leisure activities and antisocial behavior, different approach to those activities implies that unstructured activities based on fun (in our research included into hedonistic pattern) are important for young people because represent time with low stress, and enhance enjoyment (Harshita Singh, 2020). On the other hand, participating in active sports helps regulate emotions. It has been confirmed that, with an increasing degree of mental readiness, athletes also enhance their ability to regulate emotions (Yalcin et al., 2021). Sports activities can serve as an educational tool to integrate people, enhance children's success, and promote an active lifestyle and overall well-being (Stănescu et al., 2020). Regarding our results, we can conclude that the primary characteristics of sport, including activity, peer interaction, and free choice, are associated with recreational sport and contribute to emotional development.

Observing only the frequency of activities, involvement in more leisure activities was confirmed to be connected to more positive emotions (Zhang and Zheng, 2017). The referred research did not differ-

entiate between the types of leisure activities; however, those results can still explain the high correlation we noted with emotional competence and the three different leisure patterns. Other research indicates that the high frequency of entertainment activities (more than 6 hours) negatively correlates with mental health (Mana and Barman, 2020), which can explain our results showing no correlation between passive leisure activities and emotional competence. Based on an analysis of numerous theoretical and research papers, Mansfield and associates (Mansfield et al., 2020) concluded that promoting well-being is possible by modifying leisure time and focusing on structured, cultural, and high-quality activities. This is especially important to consider, given that young people often engage in various activities that change frequently (Zeijl et al., 2001).

Some researchers have confirmed that young people use leisure activities to manage stressors in everyday life, and based on this data, have recommended developing social-emotional competence programs that help reduce stress, primarily through sports activities (Hutchinson et al., 2008). In this regard, a connection has been confirmed between semiprofessional and hedonistic sports activities and positive emotions, as well as tension reduction (Kerr et al., 2002). Additionally, a higher level of emotional and social competence has been confirmed to predict future engagement in leisure activities (Pushkar et al., 1997). All noted correlations in our research, as well as discussed data, indicate that emotionally competent young people choose leisure activities that further contribute to their emotional development.

Conclusions

The first insight this research provides is regarding the emotional competence of young people in Serbia. The general conclusion that emotional competence is only partially developed in our population suggests that, although we have a solid foundation, there is still a need for educational efforts to focus on enhancing emotional competence. In this context, special attention should be directed toward developing the ability to manage and regulate emotions, which represents a higher level of emotional competence and is the least developed. Furthermore, the results indicate that the primary intervention should target the younger population, regardless of gender.

The second conclusion drawn from our findings is that young people in Serbia should be offered and encouraged to engage in more productive leisure activities. A pattern of passive leisure activities predominates across the entire population, particularly among younger, male, and unemployed participants. While this pattern is not inherently harmful, it should not overshadow other leisure activities that promote physical and mental well-being.

Lastly, the results demonstrated a significant correlation between emotional competence and leisure patterns. Until further research clarifies the nature of this mutual influence, we believe that this connection is bidirectional. More emotionally competent participants tend to choose more productive activities that have a positive impact on their own lives and those of others. Additionally, fulfilling leisure time also enhances emotional competence. One effective strategy for improving both areas of research is to integrate emotional education with thoughtfully organized leisure activities.

Ultimately, the study's findings have significant implications for future research directions. The connection between leisure time and emotional education is a valuable research field and could help us better understand both phenomena. As the foundation for leisure culture and emotional competence is formed during the adolescent period, it deserves special attention from researchers, which our results also confirm. Further studies could also consider other factors that were not included in this study, such as the participants' economic status and available community resources. Finally, future studies should address the methodological and interpretive limitations of this study. Refining sampling methods, such as adopting random sampling to improve representativeness, and incorporating comprehensive analyses, such as factor analysis, would also enhance the understanding of how leisure time is connected to emotional competence. These steps would facilitate more accurate findings, the development of effective interventions and educational policies.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, J.P., D.D.P., and K.R.; methodology, J.P. and K.R.; formal analysis, D.D.P., and K.R.; writing—original draft preparation, J.P. and D.D.P.; writing—review and editing, J.P. and D.D.P.
All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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